

Benefits of Internship Programmes for Fourth Year French Specialization Students of YUFL

Phyu Phyu Khin*

Abstract

Yangon University of Foreign Languages started to establish and carry out internship programmes - a job taken by a student in order to learn a profession or trade- for Fourth Year students of all specializations in 2014-2015 Academic Year. Now this programme is progressively interesting and important for both the students and the university. This research aims to achieve four objectives: (1) to study the students' interest and performance in internship programmes; (2) to distinguish what advantages take internship programmes to interns; (3) to recognize the host organisations' interest and satisfaction with interns; and (4) to get more appropriate procedures for the students to participate in internship programmes. It underlines the benefits of participation in internship programmes of 79 Fourth Year French specialization students in 2018-2019 Academic Year. These students joined in 24 different host organizations in April-May 2019 during summer vacation for their internship programmes. Their performance and their attitudes concerning benefits of internship were studied through their presentations and questionnaire. This research also provides how students participated as interns at the host organizations to get benefits. It is found that all of the French specialization students were able to complete the internship and they had positive views on internship programmes. The internship programmes play an important role so that the students improve soft skills such as interpersonal skills, professionalism, confidence and self-efficacy. Moreover, they gave their interesting and valuable suggestions. Elarde & Chong, (2012) stated that internships provide students with practical experience, which cannot be fully simulated in the classroom. In addition, this research is partly based on the interest and satisfaction of host organisations. The students got good recommendation of their respective responsible persons. The outcomes of this research will be an interest regarding internship programmes for the future interns. This paper is done by the qualitative and quantitative method. It is presented by using descriptive method.

Keywords: Fourth Year French Specialization students of YUFL, Internship programmes, Benefits

I. INTRODUCTION

Yangon University of Foreign Languages, founded in 1964 under the name of Institute of Foreign Languages, is located in Yangon. It is one of the two leading universities for the study of foreign languages in Myanmar. The university offers the academic programmes for part-time diploma, full-time diploma, full-time four-year bachelor's degree, master degree, Ph.D. and CHRD in the study of several Asian and European languages. The motto of the university is "Let's serve our country with foreign languages." The university established internship programmes for Fourth Year students of all specializations in 2014-2015 Academic Year. Now this programme is significantly interesting and important for both the students and the university. According to Holyoak (2013), internships are well established in the US and are becoming more common in the UK. Saniter & Siedler (2014) said that in the US internships have become a popular way to bridge the transition from education to work and in 2004, 75% of college students competed for an internship which is an important increase since the 1980s.

This research is largely based on the participation and benefits of Fourth Year French specialization students in internship programmes. During 2018-2019 Academic Year, all Fourth

* Lecturer, Department of French, Yangon University of Foreign Languages

Year French specialization students joined in different host organizations such as 7 travels and tour companies, 4 hotels, 1 airline company, 1 media service, French Institute, Diplomatic school, Myanmar Survey Research, ESC Myanmar and other business companies. They were 79 including 15 males and 64 females. They participated in their respective internship programmes in April-May 2019 during summer vacation. The length of internship period was different: from 3 weeks minimum to 2 months maximum. All of the students were able to complete the internship. In June, they made presentations in class with the aim of sharing their experience, activities at workplace and advantages or difficulties they had.

They said they had job experience and found out their talents. They also got to know how to communicate with others in professional life during the internship and they admitted improving time management. Elarde & Chong (2012) stated that internships give students with practical experience, which cannot be fully simulated in the classroom. It is also found that all of them were very interested in internship programmes and they had positive attitude.

This research partly focuses on the interest and satisfaction of host organizations with interns. It can be concluded that respective responsible persons were satisfied with the performance of interns because every student got good recommendation. The effects of this research will be a valuable awareness of internship programmes for the future interns.

Objectives

- (1) To study the students' interest and performance in internship programmes.
- (2) To distinguish what advantages take internship programmes to interns.
- (3) To recognize the host organisations' interest and satisfaction with interns.
- (4) To get more appropriate procedures for the students to participate in internship programmes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

The research questions of this study are:

- (1) What are the advantages of internship programmes for students to improve?
- (2) Are the students pleased with their internships? What are their inconveniences as interns?
- (3) Are the host organisations satisfied with the performance of interns?
- (4) What beneficial implications can be drawn for the future interns, the university and the host organisations?

Data and Method

All 79 Fourth Year French specialization students, including 15 males and 64 females, from Yangon University of Foreign Languages participated as informers. In addition, necessary information about internship programmes of YUFL was collected from Head of Department of French of YUFL. The respective responsible persons of host organisations provided every intern's performance through "Record of Student Performance in Job Training".

As the study is based on the performance and the experience of the students, the qualitative method is used to do the research. The quantitative method is also used in collecting

the data of the questionnaires for the study. This research is presented by using descriptive method.

Literature Review

Gault, Leach, & Duey (2010) highlighted that internships have a positive impact on earnings.

Hurst & Good (2010) said that the duration of an internship is generally 10 to 12 weeks long.

Green et al., (2011) stated that moreover, internships provide students with the opportunity to apply the skills that they learn in classroom settings in the world of work.

Elarde & Chong (2012) explained that internships provide students with practical experience, which cannot be fully simulated in the classroom.

Holyoak (2013) said that interpersonal skills are valued by employers and interns are perceived to require less need for socialisation or training to help them adjust to the work environment.

Holyoak (2013) also highlighted that knowledge sharing is more likely to happen if interns who join professional communities are helped by well-connected mentors who can support them integrate into the community.

Holyoak, (2013) and Shoenfelt et al., (2013) stated that internships are useful for developing soft skills and interpersonal skills, such as professionalism, cultural sensitivity, time management and integrity, which are rarely part of the formal tertiary education curriculum.

According to Galloway et al., (2014), internships were particularly useful for enhancing communication skills, team working, customer service skills and creativity among IT interns.

Maertz et al., (2014, p. 126) highlighted that consequently, interns are better prepared to cope with the challenges of the work environment and their job performance may be accelerated.

II. CASE STUDY

The students' performance in internship and their views on internship were studied through their presentations and questionnaire. This research examines how students participated as interns at the host organizations to get benefits. It is also partly based on the interest and satisfaction of host organisations.

All 79 French specialization students joined in 24 different host organizations including 7 travels and tour companies, 4 hotels, 1 airline company, 1 media service, French Institute, Diplomatic school, Myanmar Survey Research, ESC Myanmar and other business companies in April-May 2019 during summer vacation for their internship programmes. The internship period lasted from 3 weeks minimum to 2 months maximum. In June 2019, the students made presentations in class in order to share their activities as interns, workplace experience and benefits or inconveniences.

In their presentations, the students said the reasons that students must do an internship (1) to have job experience thanks to the internship; (2) to get to know one's abilities during the internship; (3) to know how to communicate with other people and (4) to know the differences between student life and professional life. They realized how important internship programmes

to improve one's soft skills for example interpersonal skills, professionalism, confidence and self-efficacy.

They said they had job experience, found out their talents and knew how to communicate with others in professional life during the internship. For example, interns in the field of Hotels and tourism got to know the terms and conditions of hotels and planes, hotel categories, travel destinations, domestic and international airports. They also got to know how to make travel packages and how to book hotels and air tickets. Now, they are able to describe travel programs in French.

In addition, 79 students were asked to answer the following open questions:

- (1) What do you expect to get by participating in the internship programme?
- (2) In your opinion, what are the advantages of the internship programme?
- (3) Are you pleased with this internship programme?
- (4) What are the inconveniences of the internship programme for you?
- (5) What do you want to advise for this internship programme?

The students' answers with their reasons and points of view on internship can be seen in Table (1), Table (2), Table (3), Table (4) and Table (5).

<TABLE 1>

The figures of Table (1) presented unbounded enthusiasm of students to participate in their internship programmes.

Q-1	What do you expect to get by participating in the internship programme?	79 Ss	100 %
1.	To get work experience/ new experience.	78	99%
2.	To know how the business/ tourism industry works.	52	66%
3.	To improve communication skills in French/ English.	47	59%
4.	To improve soft-skills such as interpersonal skills, professionalism, confidence and self-efficacy.	41	52%
5.	To get useful contacts to choose the career in future.	30	38%
6.	To have a job at work after internship.	21	27%
7.	To get salary at the end of the internship.	9	11%

Q= Question, Ss= Number of students

<TABLE 2>

The advantages of internship programmes can be seen in Table (2). A substantial amount of students got not only work experience but also soft-skills. Besides, quite a finite number of students had salary at the end of the internship.

Q-2	In your opinion, what are the advantages of the internship programme?	79 Ss.	100 %
1.	I got work experience.	79	100%
2.	I improved soft-skills such as interpersonal skills, problem solving skills, professionalism, confidence, self-efficacy and teamwork.	73	92%
3.	I got to know how the business/ tourism industry works.	42	53%
4.	I improved communication skills in French/ English.	31	39%
5.	I improved time management.	27	34%
6.	I improved IT Skills.	15	19%
7.	I had useful contacts to choose the career.	14	18%
8.	I had salary at the end of the internship.	9	11%

<TABLE 3>

Table (3) showed that a substantial number of students (86%) were pleased with the internship programme and their opinions. On the other hand, a few students (8%) were not.

Q-3	Are you pleased with this internship programme?	79 Ss.	100%
1.	I am pleased with the internship programme. It is important to get work experience. The work is interesting. The staffs were respectable and they helped me. We worked together. The workplace was warm and pleasant. I got experience and knowledge related to specific work. I am mature and I am ready to enter professional life.	68	86%
2.	I am not pleased with this internship programme. I had difficulties at first. The employees were not kind. I did not get salary.	6	8%
3.	He/ She did not answer.	5	6%

<TABLE 4>

Table (4) indicated students' inconveniences during internship. 25% of students did not have chance to practise French language in work. The tiredness, stress in work and the length of internship period were primarily concerned with difficulties of students. Besides, some wanted to get salary but they did not.

Q-4	What are the inconveniences of the internship programme for you?	79 Ss.	100%
1.	I did not have chance to practise French language at work.	25	32%
2.	I was very tired. I had many work hours. I did not have enough free time. I did not have one day off. I am late to go home.	24	30%
3.	I am stressed because of work. As I did not have any experience yet, I had difficulty to understand well the function of work at the beginning.	23	29%

	I was afraid of undertaking a given task.		
4.	I did not get salary as intern.	20	25%
5.	The internship period is short. I did not have enough time to learn the work in detail.	18	23%
6.	I have to learn only theory. The minor tasks were given instead of a major work. The responsible person of workplace did not teach clearly.	14	18%

Table (5) contained the answers of question (5), "What do you want to advise of internship programmes? The answers of the students can be divided into three parts: (1) advice to the responsible persons of the university or department; (2) advice to the responsible persons of the host organizations and (3) advice to future interns.

<TABLE 5>

Q-5	What do you want to advise of this internship programmes?	79 Ss.	100%
1.	Advice to the responsible persons of the university or department		
	1. The length of the internship period should be at least 2 months to get more experience. Internship less than 2 months is not enough to study professional life.	79	100%
	2. I would like to request to arrange the internship better and better and to found links with French organizations and companies.	25	32%
	3. I would like to request to give lecture or training about internship to students before internship.	25	32%
2.	Advice to the responsible persons of the host organizations		
	1. I would like to request to give suitable salary / certificate.	20	25%
	2. I would like to request to train the interns very well.	13	16%
	3. I would like to request to employ intern after the internship.	3	4%
3.	Advice to future interns (Before internship)		
	1. You should choose the place of work (companies, enterprises, factory, etc.) you are interested in.	16	20%
	2. You should choose correctly the place of work (companies, enterprises, factory, etc) in relation to your future work and where you can show your competence. You should choose the French company or enterprise.	15	19%
	3. You should search company information before the internship.	12	15%
	4. You need to learn French well to use easily in professional life.	6	8%
	5. You need IT skills.	6	8%
	6. As experience is better than salary, do not consider salary.	3	4%

	During internship		
	1. You should passionately learn each task. Try to gain as much experience as you want.	7	9%
	2. Ask to the responsible person of workplace if you do not understand the given task.	3	4%

Table (6) is the format of "Record of Student Performance in Job Training" arranged by the "Committee for Students Assessment" of YUFL, founded under the guidance of Dr. Kyi Shwin (Rector of YUFL). After internship period, responsible person of the host organizations filled, signed and sealed this record for each intern. Then every intern took back it and informed to the Department of French to be able to record it at the department.

<TABLE 6>

Yangon University of Foreign Languages
Department of French

Record of Student Performance in Job Training

Sr. No.	Criteria		Name of student
1.	Getting in time	Bad	0%
		Fair	3%
		Good	79%
		Excellent	18%
2.	Respect Rules and Regulations	Bad	0%
		Fair	7%
		Good	73%
		Excellent	20%
3.	Activeness	Bad	0%
		Fair	7%
		Good	73%
		Excellent	20%
4.	Language Skills	Bad	0%
		Fair	13%
		Good	75%
		Excellent	12%
5.	Obedience	Bad	0%
		Fair	2%
		Good	74%
		Excellent	25%
6.	Social Skills	Bad	0%
		Fair	2%

		Good	80%
		Excellent	18%
7.	Others	-	-
8.	Students' abilities	Bad	0%
		Fair	2%
		Good	74%
		Excellent	24%
9.	Satisfaction of the host organizations	Yes	100%
		No	0%

Signature:

Name:

The figures of Table (6) proved the assessments of the responsible person of the host organisations. Every intern finished completely internship and got good recommendation. This result clearly proved interns' interest and performance in their internship programme. It also indicated host organizations' interest and satisfaction with interns.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Saniter & Siedler (2014) stated that interns develop interpersonal skills, team-working skills, professionalism and customer management experience. They also said students also improve their communication, confidence and self-efficacy and those with internship experience are more likely to find jobs and earn more.

The students' answers indicated the significant advantages of internship programmes. Every student (100%) got work experience. Most of them (92%) improved soft-skills such as interpersonal skills, professionalism, confidence, self-efficacy, problem solving skills and teamwork. 34% improved in time management and 19% also improved IT Skills. According to Galloway, Marks, & Chillas, (2014), internships were particularly useful for enhancing communication skills, team working, customer service skills and creativity among IT interns. Holyoak (2013) and Shoenfelt et al., (2013) said that internships are useful for developing soft skills and interpersonal skills, such as professionalism, cultural sensitivity, time management and integrity, that are not usually a part of the formal tertiary education course of study.

Fifty Three percent of interns got to know how the business works, for example, those who were in tourism industry got to know the terms and conditions of hotels and planes, hotel categories, travel destinations, domestic and international airports. They also knew how to create travel packages and the way to book hotels and air tickets. Now, they are ready to describe travel programs in French. Maertz et al., (2014) highlighted that consequently, interns are better prepared to cope with the challenges of the work environment and their job performance may be accelerated.

Thirty Nine Percent of interns developed communication skills in French and English. Green et al., (2011) exposed that internships provide students with the opportunity to apply the skills that they learn in classroom settings in the world of work.

A finite number of students (18%) had useful contacts to choose the career in future. Holyoak (2013) highlighted that knowledge sharing is more likely to occur if interns who join

professional communities are assisted by well-connected mentors who can help them integrate into the community.

Nine out of 79 interns (11%) got salary at the end of the internship. Gault, Leach, & Duey, (2010) said that internships have a positive impact on earnings.

The students had some difficulties during internship. 32% did not have chance to practise French language at work. 30% were very tired because of work. 29% were stressed in workplace at the beginning. 25% wanted to be paid as interns. 23% thought that internship period is short and they did not have enough time to learn the work in detail. 18% had to do minor tasks. On the other hand, 86% of students were pleased with this internship programme because of the pleasant work environment, the help of experienced colleagues, getting work knowledge, interest of work and they felt mature.

Record of Student Performance in Job Training, Table (6), clearly revealed that all of the students (100%) were able to successfully complete the internship. Moreover every student got good recommendation of their respective responsible persons. Not only the students' interest and performance but also host organisations' interest and satisfaction with interns were considerably seen. According to Holyoak (2013), interpersonal skills are valued by employers and interns are perceived to require less need for socialisation or training to help them adjust to the work environment.

All students (100%) strongly suggested to the university that the length of the internship should be at least 2 months to get more experience. In their opinion, internship less than 2 months is not enough to study professional life. They also advised to arrange the internship better and better and to establish links with French organizations and companies. They requested to give lecture or training about internship to students before internship. Hurst & Good (2010) said the duration of an internship is generally 10 to 12 weeks long.

A finite number of students requested to host organizations to pay suitable salary or to give certificate. They also wanted host organizations to employ after the internship. They urged to give more effective training.

They informed to future interns (1) to choose the place of work they are interested in and where they can show their performance; (2) to search company information before the internship; (3) to learn French and IT well to use again easily in professional life; (4) not to consider the salary as the experience is better than it; (5) to learn passionately each task to get as much experience as they want and (6) to ask to the responsible person of workplace if they do not understand the given task.

These figures highlighted not only students' awareness and performance but also benefits they got in internship programmes. Both the satisfaction of the host organisations and students' suggestions are also beneficial information so that internship programmes of YUFL develop with an increasingly important effect.

IV. CONCLUSION

The findings of the research proved substantial advantages of internship programmes for students to improve. They got to know their abilities during the internship. They knew how to communicate with other people and the differences between student life and professional life. They tried the best outside the class to gain as much experience as they wanted. Now, they are ready to enter professional life.

Whatever circumstances they met: tiredness or stress in work or salary or not having chance to practice French or insufficient internship period, a significant amount of students (86%) were pleased with their respective internships thanks to nice work atmosphere, the support of qualified colleagues, work awareness attainment, interest of work and they felt mature. It is found that all of the French specialization students have positive attitude on benefits of internship programmes.

The host organisations were satisfied with the performance of interns. The satisfaction of the host organisations with the performance of interns was able to prove through "Record of Student Performance in Job Training". It is found that all of the French specialization students were able to complete the internship and got good recommendation of their responsible persons.

All students gave 3 suggestions to the responsible persons of the university or department, 3 suggestions to the host organizations and 6 suggestions to the future interns. According to Head of Department of French, the responsible persons of the university are increasingly taking on all necessary processes so that every intern will be able to effectively profit internship.

Galloway, Marks, & Chillas, (2014), Holyoak, (2013) and Maertz, Stoeberl, & Marks, (2014) said that internships enable students to acquire skills, which cannot be learned in the classroom environment, while employers get access to low-cost labour and reduced recruitment costs. For more ideas, not only benefits of interns but also benefits of host organizations and impact of employability can be studied. I hope there will be more concepts to be studied in future. This research is done to study the benefits of internship programmes for Fourth Year French specialization students of YUFL and positive outcomes can be found. The effects of this research will be a valuable awareness for the future interns.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Kyi Shwin, Rector of Yangon University of Foreign Languages, and Dr Mi Mi Aung, Pro-rector. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Daw Mi Mi Pyone, Head of Department of French, YUFL for her encouragement and discussion for this paper. I am also grateful to Committee for Research Project Management and Ethics of YUFL for clear and valuable guidance on writing academic research. Furthermore, I wish to thank my students for their interesting and appreciated presentations, responses and answers.

References

Internet Sources

- Elarde, J. V., & Chong, F.-F. (2012). *The Pedagogical Value of "Eduployment": Information Technology Internships in Rural Areas*. In Proceedings of the 13th Annual Conference on Information Technology Education (pp. 189-194). New York, NY, USA: ACM. Retrieved September 18, 2019, from <https://doi.org/10.1145/2380552.2380607>.
- Galloway, L., Marks, A., & Chillas, S. (2014). *The use of internships to foster employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship in the IT sector*. Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development, 21(4), 653-667. Retrieved October 15, 2019, from <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-09-2014-0150>.
- Gault, J., Leach, E., & Duey, M. (2010) *Effects of business internships on job marketability: the employers' perspective*. Education and Training, Vol. 52 Issue: 1, pp.76 - 88. Retrieved September 18, 2019, from <https://doi.org/10.1108/00400911011017690>.
- Green, B. P., Graybeal, P., & Madison, R. L. (2011). *An Exploratory Study of the Effect of Professional Internships on Students' Perception of the Importance of Employment Traits*. Journal of Education for Business, 86(2), 100-110. Retrieved October 15, 2019, from <https://doi.org/10.1080/08832323.2010.480992>.

- Holyoak, L. (2013). *Are all internships beneficial learning experiences? An exploratory study*, Education and Training, Vol. 55 Issues:6, pp573-583. Retrieved September 18, 2019, from [https://doi.org/ 10. 1108/ ET-02-2012-0024](https://doi.org/10.1108/ET-02-2012-0024).
- Hurst, J. L., & Good, L. K. (2010). *A 20-year evolution of internships: implications for retail interns, employers and educators*. The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research, 20(1), 175-186. Retrieved January 10, 2020, from [https://doi.org/ 10.1080/ 095939609 034 98342](https://doi.org/10.1080/09593960903498342).
- Ismail, Z. (2018). *Benefits of Internships for Interns and Host Organisations*. Retrieved September 18, 2019, from [https://assets. publishing. service.gov.uk/ media/ 5b3b5de3ed915d33c7d58e52/ Intern ships. pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b3b5de3ed915d33c7d58e52/Internships.pdf).
- Maertz Jr Carl, P., Stoeberl Philipp A., & Marks, J. (2014), Building successful internships: lessons from the research for interns, schools, and employers. Career Development International, Vol. 19, Issue: 1, pp123-142. Retrieved October 9, 2019, from <https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-03-2013-0025>.
- Saniter, N., & Siedler, T. (2014). *Door Opener or Waste of Time? The Effects of Student Internships on Labor Market Outcomes*, IZA Discussion Papers 8141, Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA). Retrieved October 3, 2019, from [https:// ideas.repec.org/p/iza/izadps/dp8141.html](https://ideas.repec.org/p/iza/izadps/dp8141.html).
- Shoenfelt, E. L., Stone, N. J., & Kottke, J. L. (2013). *Internships: An Established Mechanism for Increasing Employability*. Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 6(1), 24-27. Retrieved January 10, 2020, from [https:// doi. org/ 10. 1111 /iops .12004](https://doi.org/10.1111/iops.12004).

Interviewees

- Mi Mi Pyone. (October 10, 2019). Associate Professor, Head of Department of French, Yangon University of Foreign Languages.